

CREATIVE IMPULSE

Volume 1 Number 2

This selection of student work for the second volume of THE CREATIVE IMPULSE represents a wider range of subject matter than the first volume. Whether a student is bridling under the strictures of writing a villanelle, a difficult form of verse, or attempting self-discovery without embarrassment, he/she creates an original work. These works represent the goal of all artists—an authentic voice. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as they enjoyed writing them.

Lila Chalpin

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Hanging by my side
swaying like a new appendage,
always ready to reach out
and grab a moment
it sees and interprets its stolen image,
We work as one,
reflecting the world back at itself,
For me a window,
For the world a mirror.

Untitled

Sheila Orifice

Frozen footprints
scramble for the morning feed
through my picture window.

It's March and I see
the first Bee of the season
restoring itself.

Crisp early morning air
is seasoned with
heather scents
and shamrocks
from a foggy
Irish meadow.
Born is
Muire, daddy's
little girl

A plaid wrapped lass
with a scapula
rushes off to
that starched white
Catholic school.
In that freckled face,
and small pert smile
is Muire, daddy's
little girl

The accordians screech
fills the dining room
black patent leather
hits the wood in time
hands drawn in,
head held high and
sweat dripping from
her tired brow
dances Muire, daddy's
little girl

An auburn Irish setter
charges through the field
her breathless panting
breaking the silence.
from natures dew,
her coat grows damp
at her side
is Muire, daddy's
little girl

The cool dusk breeze
is sheltered by the
heavy oaken pub door
Inside is heard the
broguish howls and laughter.
weathered men, aging women
share dark warm stout and
a promise of romance
A knowing face is smiling
it is Muire, daddy's
little girl

Fuller is always late. I try so hard to get him to be on time, but no matter what I do, he seems to find some way to prolong my anxiety. If Fuller were a plane he would be in a life-long holding pattern.

When I retreat to my attic workshop, I have one thing on my mind: create. This is where we are two very different people. An ever-present veil of sawdust in the air filters the light and settles on everything in the room. That's the difference; I make sawdust and he collects it. I create the ideas that will make us both successful, but he refuses to act on them until it is too late for them to be of use to anyone. He seems deathly afraid of the responsibility that goes along with success.

Years ago, when pursuing women was the primary objective in my life, I met quite a few. I would spend endless days and most of my money trying to impress some woman with whom I was totally infatuated, and then ask Fuller if he wouldn't mind giving her a call. Well, this guy would sit there and stare at the telephone, waiting for the receiver to jump off the hook and dial his way into eternal bliss. I could only wish that the damned telephone had legs.

Slowly, I am taking over the reins of responsibility from Fuller. He still presents an occasional problem when there is something that needs to be dealt with quickly, but I have taught him that good things come from acting promptly. Occasionally we work together now. Hell, we even got married.

I can't say that Fuller's uncanny ability to procrastinate has always played a negative role. Some things are better left alone until they go away. Take for example the dinosaur. Fuller would have made an excellent cave man.

I pledge allegiance

The highly polished brass plaque reflected his image in a line of men. The room was small and without windows. The cheap panelling made it seem darker still. Sixteen boys chanted together, creating a satanic, haunting sound. He laughed to himself at the absurdity of it all. He thought of Boy Scouts and Nazi youths. He struggled to keep his right hand on his heart and his left hand raised up in the heavy military air.

To the flag

the stars and stripes drooped in front of him from an eight foot pine wood pole. From the top, an eagle of brass glared down at him, laughing at his pride. His eyes saw red, as his face grew white. His soul slowly runed blue. "What am I doing?" the blood in his body slowed. He felt faint, felt his life being drained away.

Of the United State of America

He saw himself as a child, on his stingray, riding up Vernon street in the summer sun. He almost heard his mother calling him to come back, but the wind filled his ears as he pedalled faster and faster. He thought he was flying, just like the sparrows. Forgetting the corner, he lost balance and slammed to the ground. Blood oozed from his scraped arm and leg as he hobbled slowly home. Mother wiped his tears away. Mother cleaned his battle wound.

And to the republic

the pain returned and the tears crept forward into his eyes. His bottom eyelids swelled, but the tears did not flow onto his cheek. Blinking, he could hear his mother this time. She was calling him back. Why could he only hear and not listen?

For which it stands

His feet began to feel the numbness of uncertainty. He wanted desperately to turn and walk away. He needed time he wanted air. What was he standing for, for his pride? for his freedom? Invisible bars of steel fell and surrounded him. Like ribs, they clamped his body, squeezing the air from his lungs. He was standing for fear and he knew it all too well. He stood alone in a room filled with biys, filled with fear.

One Nation Under God

He saw again and again the blank expressions of shock and the disappointed eyes that greeted his news of becoming a sailor. "Don't" was the unanimous response. His artist friends could not understand. They could only accept his creative side. This was too abstract even for them. His father and brother, the veterans, pleaded with him to reconsider. They warned him of the plight of the military man. No one, it seemed approved of his break from sanity. He prayed to God for the answer. He asked him for support and guidance. God left him alone however, to decide for himself. God was making him do this. Cursing God silently, he felt his insides crumbling apart, piece by piece.

Indivisible

Something reminded him of the warped logic that brought him to this point. He recalled the ways in which he could reap from this experience. He believed that he would become a man. He wanted to see the world outside of New England. He could pay for his own education. He needed to be away from the stifling banality of his family and friends. He hoped that he would grow away from his roots of uncertainty. But now, his uncertainty was only stronger, and more apparent than ever. He managed a superficial grin. It was he who was indivisible, unbreakable. As he reached into his soul for reassurance, he found instead a hollow shell.

With liberty

Freedom rattled in his brain. He had never actually tasted the sweet fruits of freedom. The agony of leaving everything familiar was momentarily relieved by concentrating on this new form of escape. Feeling his left arm fall asleep, he slipped into a dream. He sat on a small stretch of white sand somewhere on an island. He was painting furiously, trying to capture the sun before it met with the horizon. The colors were wild and vibrant. He could feel the warm tropical breeze on his face as the setting sun heated his skin. His arm hurt from clenching the palette.

and justice for all.

The sixteen voices came to a sudden halt. The room filled with the sound of 32 arms rejoicing their sides. The air was muddled with slow nervous breathing. "It's too late now," he murmured to himself inside. The words echoed over and over. He shook hands with a Lieutenant he would never again see, and walked outside. A sigh left his body as he grabbed his bag and walked to the bus. Looking up into the bright May sky, he spied a sparrow flying freely about.

In late September the days are still long enough to enjoy a bike ride, after work; the air is refreshing like the lat of summer watermelon and light plays gently with shadows on sun-dappled roads. On such a day, as much as I might have enjoyed a ride, school work kept me glued to my drafting table. There'll be plenty of time for exercise after you graduate, I told myself repeatedly. But John asked about a ride a week earlier. I wouldn't have refused John if there had been two feet of snow on the roads. I had stopped by the shop to pickup my newly tuned bicycle. I supposed that John found the sight of me funny: a woman in a champagne linen suit and glass pearls with a Bianchi bicycle slung easily over one shoulder. He must have figured that behind the facade of a dry-clean-only jacket I couldn't possibly be a biker.

"We should get together for a ride. I know a few really new routes," he said.

"Great," I said, "I'll make sure my pink chiffon is back from the cleaners."

Out of the bike shop, my sister helped me lower my bicycle into the hatchback of the Toyota.

"Just don't over do it and hurt your back. You haven't been riding all that long."

"Laya, I won't overdo it. Besides he's a nice guy. He wouldn't choose a 60 mile course or anything. And would you turn down a face like that?" Laya raised a sly eyebrow.

"Or a body like that?"

"My point exactly," I said, and slipped into the drivers seat.

Tuesday arrived. By five thirty I was rolling down Market Street. Black lycra shorts glistened as they moved and the sleeves of a white t-shirt flapped in the wind. Black leather cleats claived into the pedals and became part of the mechanism.

"You might want lycra pants," John said, when I pulled into the shop, "It gets pretty chilly out there." Where was out there, I panicked, and do they have pay-phones and taxis in this faraway place? I squelched the fear with the familiar athletic drive that has seen me through shin slints, pinched nerves and sprained extremities. The bicycling will be the easy part, I thought, tightening a cleat with an allen wrench. Arranging a date sans bicycles will be the hard part.

Two pairs of cleats were locked into two pairs of pedals and we left the shop, bound for the west and towards the late afternoon sun. I followed John's expert manoevering through the jungles of Allston. A gloved hand smoothed over the tires when they returned through a patch of evil, sparkling glass. My glove dropped to the tire mimicing his. Muffler pipes and metal scraps were dodged. Vehicles on uncharted courses were carefully orbited.

"We'll get on to the bike path for a while," John said, "Cars are vicious at this hour."

Viscious is too benevolent, I thought, and tried to slow my breathing. By the time we reached Watertown Square the traffic had lessened. The street beyond the square were lined with pastel-colored houses separated one from the other by a stripe of asphalt. The pastels blurred into sherbet as we sped by. I could hear only my shallow breathing and the occasional crunch of a leaf beneath the tires. Seven miles later, green signs looming overhead announced route 128 and the approach of hill country for cyclists. I imagined a drawing of a beginning cyclist in

a red circle with a line through it: Beware! Many rides later I learned that these highway crossings also signaled a quickening pace of a pack of riders. In keeping with this custom John stood up and shifted weight and power from side to side. The bicycle leaned right, then snapped left like a clock's pendulum, precise and rhythmic. I felt a heave of anxiety and a sharp pain in my thighs as I pumped up the first of many Weston hills. John looked back.

"Doing o.k.?"

"Oh, yeah. Fine. Thanks." My legs were begging for mercy. "Great hills up here. We're coming to the golf course." He was coming to the golf course. I was two hundred yards behind wishing I'd taken up golf instead. Luckily, each hill was rewarded with a short plateau on which to recover and spin the pedals. I'm doing great, I thought, one hill at a time, shift up at the base of the incline, pull up on the pedals, use the bars for extra force. Faster. Faster. John was out of view. The road was dark and muffled by a pine forest. I don't know this area at all, I thought. I don't know John at all. Would he leave me here to find my own way back? I wonder if he is waiting for me at the bottom of the next hill? He could be a mile away by now. In the midst of my inner debate I suddenly caught sight of a deep furrow half filled with gravel and rocks. I swerved to avoid it but the front wheel caught the edge of the asphalt hole. Unforgiving pavement, sandpapered bare skin and lycra upon landing. I was hurled over my handlebars. My limbs were entangled in the bicycle frame. I'm O.K. I'm O.K., I assured myself. No broken bones, my head is uninjured. The scrapes on my arms and legs, dotted with blood and dirt stung with acidic pain. Just don't cry, I told myself, don't start to cry. Remain calm. John will turn back any minute and help. The evening air was silent, devoid of the sound of clicking gears. He's not turning back to see whether I'm still following him, I thought in despair. He's obviously not concerned about anything but his own training. I should have known. He seemed rather distant.

My water bottle had rolled into the ditch on the side of the road and was oozing water like a wounded fighter. Easing myself into a standing position I gingerly retrieved the waterbottle. Then I managed to stand the bike upright. My arms throbbed and trembled with shock. I walked along the row of pines for a while, checking the bicycle for structural damage. The chipped silver paint on the frame made the throbbing in my arms increase. Are you O.K., Bianchi? I asked the bicycle aloud. Hearing no complaint of bent rims or twisted head set, I sat on the saddle and began to ride slowly, unsteadily in the direction I had last seen John. My elbows refused to bend to grasp the brake hoods. The skin around them felt tight and irritated. Damn him, I thought, shifting down and forcing my aching legs to pedal. He should have slowed down to wait for me whether I had fallen or not. Well, I'll get home if it takes all night. I should have known better. If I hadn't been wooed by this biker's charm I would have been halfway finished with a floorplan by now. Oh, sure, but when have I ever passed up a date for the charms of a handsome hardlined drawing. Face it, Shira, he's a smooth talker. You would have accepted this ride if it were a sprint up the side of a Himalayan Mountain. So, I won't let it happen again, Weston, Concord, or Kathmandu. That's all. Forget it and pedal.

The pain in my arms became numbness as I concentrated on riding, gaining speed. My hunch had been correct: there were no payphones or taxis visible. In the distance, however, at the edge of the road, a mirage was visible. A payphone? No, it was a figure silhouetted against the Weston sky. It was a man on a bicycle, peddling towards me. It was John.

“Have some trouble on those hills?” he asked, his voice as smooth and hypnotic as always.

“Well, took a little spill, nothing major.”

“Let’s take a look at the bike, make sure your tires are still in true.” Marvelous, I thought, he’s going to play doctor to my Bianchi.

“No the tires are fine.”

We continued past the rolling hills, through Weston Center and back towards home. My knuckles were white from an angry grip, my mouth was pursed. The pair of bicycles stopped in front of my house, the metallic frames catching light from the street lamps. Two cleats rested on the pavement. The other locked into their respective bicycles, anxious to continue in opposite directions. John laughed in a rich, bass voice. His mouth formed a smile of two pearly rows.

“So,” he said, “what are you doing Saturday night?”

“Nothing,” I said, “You?”

Born from your egghome came
ten chicks like songsters
to play for sin
to sing for fear of a good time.
Draped in heavy linen garb
to hide their pigment flesh
real invented people
unlike the icons of the day
whose nakedness bored me.

Born from your egghome
on a grand scale
in the landscape of a twisted mind
surrounded by turtles and other ugly birds
singing in chaotic balance
like weighing pheasant against snake
plus the weight of ten songsters
still singing, still singing, as an owl looks on
joining in with the chorus
who who, who who
while smaller birds
effortlessly hit high notes.

Born from your egghome
a bizzare community
one I haven't seen
that still scares the shit out of me
oh we have religion
ours doesn't scare me
we pay money instead of some sing song
we know better Bosch
I praise your fanatic genius
demon with monkey face
human song
the concert I still hear.

I was a reader of maps, a maker of plans
fingers sore from winding watch-stems
setting hands five minutes fast
until now

I spent time like a drunken sailor
floating face down; reckoning
my course by reflections of stars
until now

I paced the decks in a groggy fog
gasping for breath in mists of despair
longing for land or the song of a siren

I cross another equinox
out of the doldrums
into the tropic of Capricorn
toward the lingering light of solstice
five minutes never had such meaning
until now

haiku

cracking underfoot
the ice surrenders like a
kiss on the landing

She says
you can live
without the air conditioner
how to live ?
by blowing
cool air
into your hands
cupped together
soon it will all come back
how you used to
catch water from a faucet
or a fresh water lake
not like when you
caught snowflakes on your
tongue
that was different
then by
blowing cool air
into your hands
cupped together
it will circulate
up through your armpits
and soon you'll be holding on
to your own body.

She says
you'll remember
it all will come back
to you She says
life won't change
without the air conditioner
I told her
life will change
without it.

It's odd I should feast
On Italian
In a place where it's cooked
By the tons
All day long.

Toronto is so far
From home
And it's Wednesday.

I'm enjoying
You can tell
By my face
Or is it an act
For your camera?

I jest you not when it comes
To such serious matters
In Life.

As red wine
Garlic Bread
And Spaghetti
That goes so well with
Spicy sauce
Which isn't as good
As my own.
Of course.

At night in whispered tones the people talk
in cozy rooms safe by a hearthstone's glow
of death and rebirth and the jabberwock

They speak of one of myth who still may walk
in forest's dark, where brave men dare not go
at night in whispered tones the people talk

Of father gone and dreams that mock
of a mighty hero now bent and slow
of death and rebirth and the jabberwock

Of battlegrounds burnt and littered with rock
of land soaked in blood where nothing will grow
at light in whispered tones the people talk

Of a vorpal blade for sale on the auction block
bought by the town intended for show
of death and rebirth and the jabberwock

And when at the door in the night is a knock
nothing moves—for the wise old men know
at night in whispered tones the people talk
of death and rebirth and the jabberwock

Her classmates gathered in groups during recess. She sat in a corner, weaving webs of dreams only to find them all in a mangle. Everyday she was the last one to leave the kindergarten. Those years were spent wishing and waiting for a familiar face to take her home.

Primary school marked the darkest days of her childhood. Morning assemblies were a series of prayers, school songs and a speech given by the principal. All students wore white uniforms, blue ties and belts, ankle socks and flat black shoes. Shoulder length hair must be tied up neatly with blue ribbons. She looked up to the sky and shuddered as she saw the school was isolated from the outside world. High stone walls stared back at this dreamchild. No mercy. This must be prison. One morning, she was watching a bird playing in the sand box. Suddenly she felt someone breathing from behind, then a light tap against the heel of her shoe.

"Your heels are half an inch higher than standard. The school only allows one-inch-high heels."

"Sorry Sister Virginia, I'll change to another pair." How rude! Some nuns were actually wolves in lambskins, in the name of Jesus.

All students had a school diary in which a special section was reserved for teachers' notes to parents. Every other day, this child was haunted the moment she searched through her schoolbag, inside out, for a textbook or homework and realized the painful fact. God, even prayers were useless. Crushing the diary in her slippery hands, she walked out to the platform where the teacher is waiting. In front of all her classmates, she had to accept contempt and mockery the world offered. She could feel the sickening sensation of shame rising to her throat. Yesterday she was late, today she forgot her book. She was a bad student, yes, very bad. She wandered through the lonely corridors, leading her from classroom to classroom. She watched other playing, with regret. When the corners of her eyes grew blurry, she retreated to the school chapel. Brother Jesus would talk to her and soothed this burning soul. She wanted to go home but could not bear the thought of hurting her parents. Such a shame.

"Again! When will you ever learn? You're hopeless." Her father's face was distorted. He sighed and glanced through her diary, her numerous records.

She could not contemplate her own absentmindedness. She read lists of homework and textbooks cautiously. After prayers to God, at last she allowed herself to relax. Butterflies and birds, how lovely to have wings. Please set me free, she thought and thought. She was happy whirls of wind almost devoured her. Suddenly a strange shadow fell across her face. Satan had come to capture this little girl. She opened her umbrella and begged God God for help. The wind lifted her and she departed from earth. However, as she took a moment to grasp for air, she began to fall and Satan laughed with satisfaction. She was falling, falling. . . . slowly she regained consciousness, her heart stopped as the clock struck eight. She was late again.

Soon she thought of a way to secure punctuality. Three alarm clocks with each one fifteen minutes earlier than the other. She also tied one clock to the lamp with a string. It dangled slightly above her ear. This girl woke up at least four times to check the time. It worked. Confusion and fatigue were the price. Afternoon nap was necessary. Poor parents said she was lazy.

Her sisters played with Reverend Hyatt's daughters. She was too young to understand another language. Fortunately, she found four loyal friends in her bedroom. Mother did not like them very much but still washed their clothes every week.

"Why are you talking to the pillows? Give me the pillow cases." Her mother walked away with soapy hands.

"They are lonely," she murmured.

She lived for Fridays and Saturdays. Her older sisters brought her out for ice cream cones on Friday nights. They always left the pointy tips of the cones and stuck them on her ice cream. She giggled and ate slowly. Early morning, they set out with stuffed bags of food and came back in the evening with empty hands. The health program announced a new formula. Accordingly, mother washed her daughter's hair with egg white and lemon juice. Her young daughter thought it was a game.

She was seven years old when the pressure from school smothered her. Maybe she was not so innocent for a child, she tried to understand the world. Protestant's, Catholics were battling, in Palestine over faith. She was torn between the Anglican Church her sisters went and the Catholic belief the school imposed. Knowing the teachings and parables of the Bible by heart, she concluded such were the faults of human weakness. She learned of Buddhism. The teachings were more profound. Buddha was human, not a spirit or the unapproachable. She felt glad. Love and water had the same qualities, the persistence of water would wear down all obstacles, subtly.

If she happened to adopt a child, she would pick the one hiding in the corner. There the timid, the ugly, the outcast. She was one of them. I know her very well, ever since she was born. I am she.

The end.

Under the bright lights I stood alone
While my date fought the crowd to get popcorn:
Surrounded by the shiny, white tile floor,
Teenagers and clusters of young girls.
“You look exactly like her”, I had been told.
Two of the gigglers approached boldly.
They handed me a pen—My date returned—
“Go ahead *Molly!*” The words slipped through his grin.
I proudly began autographing . . .
Then the smile fell from my face. I panicked—
I couldn’t remember her last name.

After Hours

Barbara Ridgeway

The plaster cherubs blush at sunset, naked when the tourists leave. White enamel tables grow flourescent in the grass. She clears the plates, he washes, stacks fold tablecloths, slides a mop around the greasy floor and scans the lawn for lost change. She counts her tips and buys a glass of soave, he drinks coffee. He’ll stay awake all night and write that song need money, time, need more than four an hour and random dimes. They sit among the statues as the buzz of dinner fades “I love this time if day” she says, he scowls rhythmically stabs out his cigarette out on a plaster foot “Sunsets make me sick”

You are as sweet as snowfall
warm as candlelight
quiet as the winter land
soft as the color
of swampwater in the spring
And as full as it, of life

I am different, my life
Is sometimes blustery as fall
sometimes bright as spring
changeable as winter sunlight
strong then pale watercolor
steady only as a path through the marshy land

How then, did we two land
Together in a laughing life
Of kaleidoscopic colors
Picking up the leaves in fall
Looking for a comet's light
In the bitter cold morning of spring

Maybe, I thought, it was just spring
Spring fever, invading the land
With its false rosy light
Warping perceptions, messing up life
Then it was summer, then fall
And you didn't change color

You were still you, and the color
That was love ran deeper than a spring
Welling from the earth, I fall
In love again, when I see you, hear you, or land
on your doorstep smiling, life
Is somehow in a better light

You are darkness, I am light
But mix to a warm, wellfound color
Sharing, whispering anchor in my life
Bringing tulips in the spring
Traipsing together through across the wooded land
Hunting rocks, peace, and stars as they fall

Light a candle, color
The land that is ours, for spring
For fall, for life.

t
Texture in thick grays
Sticky layers of ritual
like phlegm
philosophical mud
threadlike
protest and metal
Conversation colored glass
and plastic and the cat's shit
still moist and monochromatic will be
heaved into this brown-gray sea
a fat metallic sponge

a swollen radiator full of bubbles
or a Wurlitzer glowing in neon bong
clank tap tapping slowly
expensive dry copper heat
dry cracking clay beds
and brown beds of waving grass
thick lines—huge cillig
four dozen chocolate swirls
like 48 rubber donuts
spewing out from clatter
and biodegradable sun drool

here the outcast sleeps
formless foot upon his back
“to speak after that to anyone
about Picasso” and motions
and motions and silence
bellows in the background.

I know the nacre patterns are baroque,
Eureka screams the waking eye and soul
when I can touch the heart of painted yolk.

Graffiti city, urban soft stroke,
the blinding colors sun of aerosol,
I know the nacre patterns are baroque.

The golden ancient gifts in me provoke
my love for life, my dream, my lust, my goal
when I can touch the heart of painted yolk.

If nature runs to heaven like smoke
and flowers rain on me, my world is whole,
I know the nacre patterns are baroque.

A man is dead his face an artichoke,
atomic bombs and nations in control
when I can touch the heart of painted yolk.

The basic is my truth and hit of coke,
your worthless world a line of dead orioles,
I know the nacre patterns are baroque
when I can touch the heart of painted yolk.

When Lila commands, "Write a villanelle"
you run short in thought forget how to think
she's a sadist you know, we can all tell

Your heart starts to slow, your mind turns to gel
palms wretch in sweat, and you want to go drink
When Lila commands, "Write a villanelle"

When you realize villanelles don't sell
visions emerge of the wallets that shrink
she's a sadist you know, we can all tell

A part of you says, "this is living hell"
you never quite reach that creative brink
When Lila commands, "Write a villanelle"

You start to get sick and never get well
You've had it with life, and call up a shrink
she's a sadist you know, we can all tell

You'll surely get sent to a padded cell
and then start to feel like the missing link
When Lila commands, "Write a villanelle"
She's a sadist you know, we can all tell.

Nature's present here
Wild, free, life fighting pavement
sidewalks live and breathe

Like an old forest
Fallen limbs, leaves and bricks
Broken glass secrets

I could chew this air
Its soot, sweat, salt grind my teeth
Dirty on my tongue

Only children see
The ancient dark buildings move
Slow, sleeping giants

It resents winter
Clean new snow makes it faceless
Dirties it with spite,

It thrives in summer
Beer spilled on hungry sidewalks
Feeding its rough weeds

Nature,
rub your soul
onto these slothful beings
your blue-gray heavens
bring out their cadmium glow
but what they need
is your touch
the touch
that makes your trees flutter endlessly
when there is no wind
erection of blossom to the sky
secrete the substance
that splinters
the epithelium of the earth
into goosebumps
swaying like seaweed and squiggling like vermin
let man live in harmony with you

The most wonderful thing to be
a white American in Athens in the spring.
The red red poppies the blue blue sea wave
my colors across the white white marble
to my sixth fleet massive as a giant shield
reflecting the middle east sun back upon
itself with rays of steel as oracles
from round the world grope now
for English words to appease the gods.
My countrymen.
Fat rude tourists dumped from sonic booms
take in quaintness with liters of liquor.
The green gold eagle of delights spread
from Americas' military hands to bottles
of ouzo to ancient streets from open mouths.

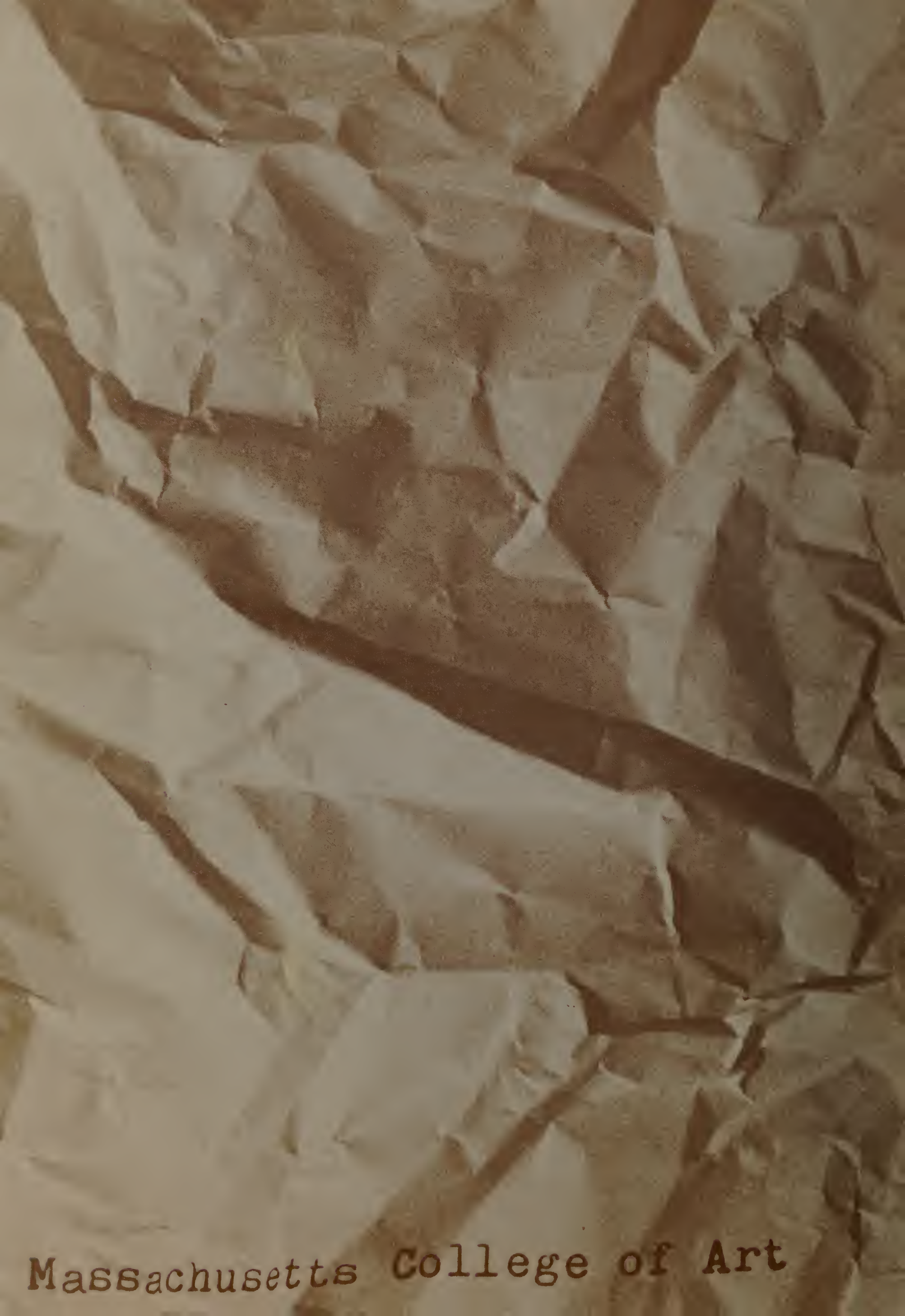
Sonia Batalian

The excitement of sparkling ornaments
With shades of red and green
Suspended on plastic trees
Vivid colors glimmering out loud,
Cast shadows of Santa dolls
On a field of red velvet

Sisters

Jane Freitas-Coffman

Two girls giddy from the soft earth of spring
sitting on the iron railroad rails holding
the last cold of winter.
Laughter stops as silence releases down
the rails like a weapon.
“You go without a shirt, wear pants and
boys’ sneakers.”
“Miss Pretty, Miss Frilly, Miss Lady, Miss Dumb.
I’m sure to feel free when fall breezes come.
Scattering babies like seeds—Oh, I’ll be a mother
if that’s what you’re asking.”
Boy shoes revolted to rage against the gravel crown
kicking stones into the iron sent a piercing message
down the rails.



Massachusetts College of Art